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MESSAGE

OF

GOVERNOR J. E. ERICKSON

TO THE

TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

OF THE

STATE OF MONTANA

1931

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GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

Mr. President and Members of the Twenty-Second Legislative Assembly:

For the fourth time, as your Chief Executive, I am privileged to address the opening session of the Assembly. On previous occasions it has been my pleasure to felicitate the body upon the prosperous condition of the people and upon the gratifying progress and improvement in every industry and activity of the State. Today a changed condition confronts us. We are in the midst of a Nation-wide industrial and economic depression, the baneful effects of which are halting our progress and impairing our prosperity. This, however, is neither the time nor the place to paint a dark picture nor to indulge in pessimistic foreboding. Conditions do not really justify such an attitude. Montana is passing through this unhappy period with less distress than many of our sister states.

Notwithstanding the fact that present conditions have existed for more than a year, our banks and financial institutions remain solvent, deposits remain normal, and this period has been singularly free from business failures and bankruptcies. The stock industry, a most important one for Montana, gives every indication of overcoming the disadvantage of low prices and subnormal feed conditions, and will emerge from the depression with little, if any, impairment. The rains of the last year were not as copious as we wished them to be and crops were much below normal. Yet we have enough to prevent destitution and to ward off a shortage of food supply.

Unemployment we have, but so far it has not become acute and the need of those who by reason of economic conditions are denied the privilege of earning their living by their labor is a challenge to our humanitarian organizations already devoted to public betterment to redouble their efforts. Sure I am that the great heart of the people of Montana will see to it that destitution and suffering are relieved. As a matter of fact Montana has passed through many depressions and our people have overcome greater obstacles than those now existing.

The direful days of the early twenties are still fresh in our memories. Bank failures, business bankruptcies and languishing industry then spread a pall over our State, and yet we recall how quick the recovery, and that an era of unprecedented prosperity followed. Trust the strong and courageous men and women of our State to meet successfully the problems of this hour. Hardships are not new to them and we may safely indulge the hope that better times are

close at hand. While we should maintain a sympathetic, helpful concern for the more unfortunate of our citizens, let us build and plan for a better and brighter tomorrow. Of the watchman on the tower let our inquiry be not "What of the night?", but rather, "What of the morning?"

State Finances

The problem of keeping expenses within our income is always with us. The cost of government is gradually increasing. The public is constantly demanding more and more service from the State, and these demands are often made without much thought as to where the money is to come from with which to pay for additional service.

The populations of our educational, penal and eleemosynary institutions are increasing from year to year, which of course means increase in cost. Thus far we have been able to get along without an increase of the property taxes for State purposes. In 1920, the people voted an additional mill and a half levy for the maintenance of our Greater University. That levy expires this year and it became evident to the last Legislative Assembly that some provision must be made for a continuance of this levy, or to provide some other means of revenue for the maintenance of our institutions of higher learning.

In my message to the Twenty-first Assembly I suggested one of two plans to take the place of the mill and a half levy which expires this year. First, to amend the classification laws so as to make the full value of all property the tax base for State purposes only; second, to submit to the people at the 1930 election a proposition to adopt an additional millage tax to take the place of the one expiring. The Assembly chose the second plan and submitted to the people a proposition to authorize a levy of three mills to be made for the purpose of maintaining the six units of the Greater University, the Extension Service, the Experiment Station and their allied activities. There was also submitted a proposition to authorize the issuance of $3,000,000 in bonds for the purpose of erecting additional buildings at our State institutions.

At the recent election both of these measures carried, and you are now authorized to levy a tax not to exceed three mills for the support of the Greater University. In order to carry out the mandate of the people I believe there should be set aside and appropriated for the exclusive use of the Greater University and its allied activities so much of the proceeds from the three mill levy as in your judgment is necessary for the maintenance of these institutions.

The present economic depression is going to seriously affect the State's income for the next biennium. There will be a sharp decrease in the proceeds from the metal mines tax, corporation licenses and all other special taxes. A substantial decline may be

expected in the valuation of property, such as live stock and real estate, and an increase in the delinquent taxes. Shall the present activities of the State be curtailed to meet this probable decrease in revenue, and if so, where are the curtailments to be made? I am sure no substantial reduction can be made in the cost of maintaining our penal and charitable institutions. These unfortunates and derelicts, and there are more than three thousand of them, must be housed, fed, clothed, educated, physicianed and humanely cared for. We cannot afford to be parsimonious with these, our wards. Shall the services which are now being rendered the people by the Board of Health, the Livestock Sanitary Board, the Department of Agriculture, Labor and Publicity, the Public Utilities Commission, the Board of Equalization, the Industrial Accident Board, be curtailed and reduced? These boards are carrying out the mandates and expending funds authorized by previous Assemblies. You who are fresh from the people who are supposed to profit by the activities of these State departments are in a position to know whether the services rendered justify their costs. If not, there should be retrenchment.

In the matter of appropriations we should bear in mind that we are confronted with a constitutional provision which says:

> "No appropriation shall be made for any expenditures authorized by the Legislative Assembly whereby the expenditures of the State during any fiscal year shall exceed the total tax then provided for by law, and applicable to such appropriation or expenditure, unless the Legislative Assembly making such appropriation shall provide for levying a sufficient tax, not exceeding the rate allowed in section nine (9) of this article, to pay such appropriations or expenditures within such fiscal year. This provision shall not apply to appropriations or expenditures to suppress insurrection, defend the state, or assist in defending the United States in time of war. No appropriation of public moneys shall be made for a longer term than two years."

The State Board of Equalization estimates the income for State purposes, exclusive of the proceeds from the three mill levy for the Greater University, to be $2,100,000 per year for the next biennium. This is considerably less than asked for in the Budget for the next two years. It will be seen that it is going to require close figuring to keep our expenses within our income for the next two years. Of course, the arbitrary reduction of appropriations without also curtailing State activities will be of no avail.

Highway Construction

During the last four years, following the passage of Initiative Measure No. 31, the State of Montana has conducted a vigorous

highway program. We are rapidly getting out of the mud in our highway transport. At the end of this four-year period of progressive construction it can be stated that more than half of approximately five thousand miles on our Federal System has been covered with standard government construction. Looking to the future, there is satisfaction in the assurance that in a like or somewhat shorter period the State, cooperating with the Federal government, can complete its trunk system, save more than the cost in the conduct of our own business, and afford comfortable transit for the interstate traveler.

The last Congress made largely increased appropriations for highway purposes. Under authorizations up to 1933 Montana will have available two and one half million dollars of Federal aid per year instead of a million five hundred thousand dollars per year as heretofore, provided we are able to match the government money with local funds. A surplus has now accumulated to the credit of Montana amounting to more than six million dollars.

I cannot conceive that this State will consider for a single moment neglecting to use this Federal assistance. To take up these funds the Montana Automobile Association, on the recommendation of the State Highway Commission, has prepared a bill that will be introduced immediately, providing for the sale of six million dollars of anticipation gasoline tax warrants during a period of four years, underwritten by a portion of the gasoline tax and following a plan that has been used in New Mexico, Idaho and several other States.

I have examined the proposed statute. Inasmuch as it provides that these warrants shall constitute an irrevocable contract between the State and the warrant holder and specifically provides that the revenue therefor shall not be repealed or reduced until the obligation is fully discharged, this measure would appear to be entirely within the provisions of the Montana constitution relating to indebtedness.

I recommend the passage of this measure at the earliest possible moment and its submission at once to the Montana Supreme Court. If the measure is upheld it will enable a highway construction program of more than six million dollars for the year 1931 and especially at this time will take care of much unemployment. Montana is making a sound economic investment in its highways and should carry on to a full completion its trunk system of roads.

Reapportionment

Article VI Sec. 2 of our Constitution provides:

"The Legislative Assembly shall provide by law for an enumeration of the inhabitants of the State in the year 1895, and every tenth year thereafter; and at the ses-

sion next following an enumeration made by the authority of the United States shall revise and adjust the apportionment for representatives on the basis of such enumeration according to ratios to be fixed by law."

Heretofore, it has been the custom to revise and adjust the apportionment of members of the House of Representatives at the session next following the taking of the Federal census. Following this precedent it will be incumbent upon you to fix the number of Representatives in the Lower House for the next ten years at this session. In this connection I wish to suggest that the number of Representatives as now fixed by the last apportionment might be reduced with advantage to the State and the taxpayers.

It is interesting to note that twelve Western States, namely: Nebraska, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Montana, North Dakota, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah, Montana has a greater number of representatives than any of these states except North Dakota. Colorado, with a population of more than 1,000,000, has 65 members; Washington, with more than a million and a half population, has 97 members; Oregon, with 1,000,000 population, has 60 members; Utah, with only about 33,000 population less than Montana, has 55 members; North Dakota, with 113 members, is the only one of these states with a greater number of representatives than Montana.

A comparison of the cost of holding the 1929 session of the Legislature in this group of Western States with the cost of holding the Montana session will show that a considerable saving could be made by reducing the membership. It cost the taxpayers of the State of Montana to hold the 1929 session $179,855.00. It cost Colorado $3,000.00 less; it cost the State of Washington $30,000.00 less; it cost Oregon $30,000.00 less; it cost North Dakota $73,000.00 less and it cost our neighboring state, Utah, $137,000.00 less. These states all have 60-day sessions.

Montana paid more for clerks, attaches and attendants at the last session than any other state in this group, except Oregon alone. Montana paid for this item $54,000.00; Nebraska paid $35,790.00; Colorado paid $39,980.00; Washington paid $50,821.00; North Dakota paid $21,645.00; Utah paid $15,622.00.

There is no question that a substantial saving in taxpayers' money could be made by reducing the membership of the House. It would make the body less cumbersome and would facilitate the dispatch of business and I think we will all agree that the efficiency of the body would in no wise be impaired.

State Penal and Charitable Institutions

The heads of the various State institutions have filed their biennial reports setting forth their needs and their problems. I trust that in addition to perusing these reports you will find it con-

venient to have special committees from your body visit the institutions and get first-hand information as to how the State is caring for its more than three thousand dependents and derelicts. I am sure that those in charge will welcome inspection by your committees and will gladly receive suggestions, criticisms and advice in regard to the work they are doing. To properly care for these public charges is one of the State's most difficult problems and one of the heaviest burdens for the taxpayer to carry.

State Prison

The population of the State Prison is increasing at an alarming rate. There are at present more than seven hundred inmates, an increase of more than fifty per cent in two years. The Crime Commission, to which I shall refer later, made a careful and complete survey of the prison and found that there were facilities for housing and caring for five hundred convicts, three hundred and fifty inside of the walls and one hundred and fifty outside. This discloses a serious condition of overcrowding. The Commission recommends the building of additional cell houses, repairing and modernizing antiquated and dilapidated buildings. A median institution is also recommended where young and first offenders should be kept apart from the hardened criminals. This new institution should be located upon a large farm where the inmates might be employed.

Suggestions are also made in respect to the education, employment and vocational training of the prisoners. In determining what should be done in the way of improvement for the prison you will find this report informative and helpful, and while the finances of our State will not justify an attempt to carry out all the recommendations made by the report yet we should move along the lines suggested therein.

There are nine female convicts in the prison. The present facilities for caring for these inmates are inadequate and new quarters should be provided. In view of the small number of female convicts, it has been suggested that the Assembly authorize the Warden to arrange with some neighboring state where they are prepared to take care of female prisoners, to keep these women for us. Unquestionably this would be more economical for the State than to provide building and equipment to properly care for them at home. I believe this matter should be considered by you.

Industrial School

For the Industrial School at Miles City, the Commission recommends among other things, the building of additional cottages to relieve the overcrowded conditions which now prevail. A parole officer is also suggested to supervise and look after the boys after they have been paroled and to see to it that the training and discipline secured at the institution do not go for naught.

State Hospital

The last decade witnessed no increase in the population of our State. The patients sent to the State Hospital, however, have steadily increased in numbers. This is a sad commentary upon our civilization and presents a problem which we must meet. There are now nearly 1600 patients at this institution and increased facilities for their care must be made from time to time. There are a number of antiquated buildings that should be remodeled and repaired in order to secure the safety and comfort of the patients who occupy them. New buildings as well as additional facilities are needed in order to properly care for these unfortunate people.

The last Legislative Assembly appropriated $75,000 for the erection of a new building, and pursuant thereto a fire proof building 42 x 186 feet, three stories high has been erected and is now occupied. This relieved the congestion at least temporarily. In my judgment provision should be made for the erection of a similar building in the near future. The Superintendent, Dr. Bolton, in his report calls attention to the urgent need of a doctors' cottage and additional hospital and medical facilities.

I am sure that we all feel the State should exert every effort for the proper care and comfort of these stricken people, and that a liberal amount of the bond issue recently voted should be set aside for the use of this institution.

Tuberculosis Sanitarium

This institution is doing a humanitarian work for those who are stricken with the dread tuberculosis malady. Scores of men and women are here restored to health and usefulness and the work done is such that its value cannot be estimated. There is at present a waiting list of more than forty, who are sorely in need of treatment. Building and equipments are needed and if possible should be supplied. I trust that the needs of this institution both in the way of additional buildings and equipment will receive your careful consideration.

In his biennial report, the Superintendent, Dr. Vidal, is asking for a new building with a fifty-bed capacity and for additional medical and hospitalization facilities. Such capital improvements should be made at this institution as, under all of the circumstances, you think the State can afford.

Other Institutions

The Greater University of Montana and its allied activities are under the direct supervision of the Board of Education, as are also the Orphans' Home at Twin Bridges, the Vocational School for Girls at Helena, the School for the Deaf, Blind and Feeble-Minded at Boulder and the Industrial School at Miles City.

At a recent meeting of this Board a survey was made of the

needs and requirements of these institutions and a report of this survey will be made to you together with recommendations for your information and guidance.

I have referred to the needs of these institutions with some detail for the reason that upon this body has been placed the responsibility of allocating the proceeds of the bond issue recently voted among the different institutions. While I believe that urgent present needs should be taken care of, I trust that you will not find it necessary to distribute the entire issue at this time. It seems to me that prudence and sound judgment dictate that a liberal amount should be held in reserve to meet future emergencies which are sure to rise from time to time. The people who so generously voted these bonds did so under the impression that the amount would be sufficient to meet the building requirements of the institutions for a term of years, and it is our part to keep faith with those who imposed upon us this trust.

State Lands

From a perusal of the biennial report of Commissioner I. M. Brandjord, you will find substantial progress has been made and that the permanent school fund has been materially enriched during the last two years. Let me quote from the Commissioner's report:

"In some aspects the years embraced by this report have been like two good ships coming into port richly laden with precious merchandise both from near by regions and distant countries—great stores of varied treasure, excellent for the immediate present, and auguring well for a greater future. The income for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1929, was the largest ever received by this department during any one fiscal year in its history, and although the reduced crops and declining prices prevailing during 1929 and 1930 have made themselves felt, the decrease for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1930, was less than $52,000.00 below the high water mark set during the previous year. The receipts for the department during the two-year period reached the considerable total of $9,705,676.98, of which $3,125,881.34 was actual income, and $6,579,795.64 represented receipts for the permanent funds, including repayments on investments."

During the two years ended June 30, 1930, 145,000 acres of land were sold at a total price of $2,067,000. This does not include mortgaged lands that have been disposed of during this period. Of the 4,575,000 acres owned by the State 2,875,000 are under lease, providing a rental income of $396,760. The amount of the leased lands has increased approximately 200,000 acres during the last two years. It will be observed that there still remain 1,780,000 acres not leased from which no revenue is derived.

The Department is putting forth every effort to put as much of this vast heritage on a revenue basis as possible. To facilitate the leasing of these lands the Commissioner recommends legislation authorizing the Land Board to hold public leasing in counties wherever such leasing seems desirable.

It has been recently discovered that a number of power sites on the Flathead river below Polson in Lake and Sanders counties, heretofore claimed by the Federal government, really belong to Montana as part of its school land. The title to these power sites is now being transferred to the State through the Federal Power Commission. This is really a worth-while discovery and a valuable addition to our common school assets.

Farm Loans

The farm loan situation is slowly improving but remains one of the most difficult problems that this Department has to deal with. Of the 2,400 original loans 127 remain in good standing. One hundred and eighty-four loans have been converted into amortization mortgages and 904 loans have been converted into sales contracts, so that a total of 1,215 loans representing $2,689,865 are in reasonably good condition.

The plan followed in the case of delinquent loans is to secure title in the State, voluntarily given or by foreclosure. The mortgagors are given the privilege to repurchase the lands within the redemption period upon the easy payment plan. In this way it is hoped that eventually the State will make good in its investment and save the school fund from any loss.

State Forests

The forests owned by the State of Montana embrace a vast area of nearly half a million acres and form one of the State's most valued assets. As is well known, these forests are subjected annually to devastating fires. The State, as well as the Federal government and private owners, has suffered tremendous losses and every precaution should be taken to minimize the danger from these destructive fires. In order to reduce the danger of fires from human agencies, I believe it would be wise to authorize some executive officer of the State, during periods of extreme emergencies, to close to tourists and the visiting public, such areas as are unusually hazardous, entrance being permitted only under some form of permit issued by a responsible authority. Many states have such provisions and they have been found helpful in preventing forest fires.

Our forest lands are not in compact bodies but are scattered over a wide area, thus making administration expensive and supervision difficult. Some progress towards consolidation has been made by interchange with the Federal government but there are

many isolated tracts intermingled with privately-owned areas. It occurs to me that it would be the part of wisdom to invest the State Board of Land Commissioners with authority to make exchanges with private owners. In the event you should regard this suggestion favorably, I believe an advisory board should be created, to be composed of the dean of the Forestry school of the University of Montana, the United States regional Forester, and the Commissioner of State Lands and Investments, to negotiate the exchanges and report to the State Land Board for its information and guidance. I would advise that the State Forester be made the secretary of the proposed advisory board.

Crime Commission

The last Assembly provided for the appointment of a Crime Commission to make a survey of our penal institutions and to suggest changes in our criminal laws and procedure, with a view to making speedier and more certain the conviction of criminals and the enforcement of our criminal laws. The Commission was composed of three District Judges, namely: George B. Winston, John Hurly and S. D. McKinnon, appointed by Chief Justice Callaway; and two laymen, namely, Alfred Atkinson, President of Montana State College, and Herbert M. Peet, editor of the Great Falls Tribune, appointed by the Governor. Later Mr. Peet resigned and H. B. Brooks, editor of the Chinook Opinion, was appointed in his place.

The report which has been made available for your consideration is such as might be expected from the high character and ability of the men who compose the Commission. The report shows a prodigious amount of labor, and with painstaking care in the arrangement of details points out evident weaknesses in our criminal procedure and makes pertinent suggestions in regard to changes in our criminal procedure and laws, which have for their purpose the speedier and more effective enforcement of our criminal statutes. A study of this report, it occurs to me, will be helpful to all of us and I believe that the suggestions and recommendations merit your careful and serious consideration.

Montana National Guard

Montana citizens generally give little more than passing thought to our National Guard. It is not amiss, therefore to remind them that we have here an entire regiment, completely equipped and ready to take the field in any emergency on a few hours' notice. The Guard has in times past given conclusive evidence of its efficiency, and I am persuaded that never in its history has it been in stronger condition, more ready to meet any demand that may be made upon it, than it is today. It may indeed be a fact that knowledge of the presence of such an organization, trained

to the keenness demanded by the Federal government, acts as a deterrent to some who might be disposed to foment trouble within our borders were the situation otherwise.

The equipment which the Federal government has furnished to the Montana regiment has a value of some $400,000. Our annual appropriation for the support of the Guard has been only $25,500. It is worthy of note that the Federal government pays more in salaries and expenses of instructors for our regiment than the State pays for the entire Guard. This friendly force numbered 1,190 on the 30th of June, last, and Montana's appropriation for its maintenance cost the citizens of the State only four and three-quarters cents per person, this calculation being based upon the State's population as shown by the recent census. In contrast to this it is shown that the per capita average for population of the United States is 15.51 cents for the support of the Guard in all the States.

Montana's appropriation per capita for the Guard is only $21.43, and this state is next to the lowest in the Union in the matter of cost of the force. Statistics for the entire country show the per capita appropriations for the National Guard in the several states to range from $20.51 in South Dakota to $269.79 in Pennsylvania.

In view of the facts here set out, I recommend that in providing for the National Guard during the next biennium you deal as liberally with that organization as the financial condition of the State will permit.

Classification Law

Under our present classification law all agricultural products are classified under Class 3, which provides that 33 1-3 per cent of its true and full value shall be the base for the imposition of taxes. One of the farmer's problems is to market his grain in an orderly and business-like way, so as to prevent dumping his product on the market and thereby forcing prices down. To avoid this it is pretty generally advocated that wheat be stored and held until such time as it may be sold to the advantage of the grower. But if grain is thus held until the first Monday in March it becomes subject to taxation.

This is an additional burden which the farmer in his present distressed condition cannot stand and he should not be made to do so. Grain stored under such circumstances should be exempt from taxation. This, however, would violate the provisions of our Constitution. But partial relief can be provided by changing the classification of grain in storage from Class 3 to Class 5 under our present classification law, and so make 7 per cent of the true and full value the basis of taxation on grain so stored instead of 33 1-3 per cent as is now provided by law.

There is no just or valid reason why grain in storage should be made to carry a greater burden of taxation than money on deposit in the banks. There is not much that can be done in the way of legislation to relieve the unfortunate condition of agriculture but everything possible should be done to lighten the burden of this industry.

Are We State-Conscious?

We wonder at times if the people are sufficiently State-conscious in regard to the use of our own products and resources in our industries and activities. There are now at least one million barrels of crude oil in storage for which there is no market and no demand, while the bulk of the gasoline and oils used in the State are shipped in from other States. The same is true, more or less, of other products, such as lumber and other building materials and food products of which we have a surplus.

I do not know that much can be done in the way of legislation to remedy such a situation, but it does seem that our people should insistently and systematically demand from the trade and from dealers Montana products, other things being equal. The indications are that during the next two years there will be a considerable amount of public building at our institutions and that activities in highway construction will be speeded up. It seems to me that it would be proper to enact legislation giving preference on all public works to Montana labor, Montana building material and Montana products, at least in so far as it is good business so to do.

Survey of Elementary Schools

The Legislative session of 1929 passed Senate Resolution No. 2, requesting the State Board of Education to select a commission of five to make a survey of the high school situation in Montana and to recommend to the Twenty-second Assembly a revised and uniform code of high school laws. Such a commission was appointed, consisting of Messrs. A. T. Peterson, G. A. Ketcham, C. V. Brown, Silas Gaiser and M. P. Moe. This commission has made the survey and submitted its report and a proposed code of laws for our high schools, to which your attention is respectfully directed.

At a recent meeting of the State Board of Education the following resolution was adopted:

"Whereas, The High School Commission has called the attention of the Board of Education to the necessity for a commission to make a survey in connection with the elementary schools of the State:

"Now, therefore, be it resolved, That the Board of Education suggest to the Twenty-second Legislative session that it adopt a resolution similar to Joint Resolution No. 2 of the Twenty-first

session which shall contemplate the selection of a commission to make a survey of the elementary schools situation in the State of Montana, to report back to the Twenty-third Assembly at the 1933 session."

I believe this request should have your careful consideration.

Refunding Educational Bonds

In 1921 the State Board of Examiners sold $2,804,000 of the educational bonds authorized at the election of 1920, these bonds to run for twenty years and redeemable after ten years at the option of the Board of Examiners. These bonds carry an interest rate of five and one-half per cent. The ten-year period will expire in July of this year, and while the State is not in position to pay them I believe that under present conditions a lower rate of interest can be obtained, and I therefore suggest that the Assembly authorize the State Board of Examiners to refund these obligations at a lower rate of interest. I believe that a substantial saving in interest payments can thus be made.

Fish and Game

No enumeration of the natural resources of the State would be complete without reference to our fish and game. The department charged with the protection and propagation of wild life and fur-bearing animals is self-supporting, its operating costs being met wholly from the sale of licenses and permits, fines collected and confiscations made. In the last few years the number of fish hatcheries has been increased from three to fourteen. New spawn-taking stations and many rearing ponds have been established, and a pond cultural station has recently been constructed at Miles City, where warm-water fishes suitable for the warmer waters of eastern Montana are reared. Duck food has been planted and numerous game birds imported and liberated. Last year a game farm was established and from this nearly 6200 Chinese and Mongolian pheasants have been liberated.

The commercial value of fur-bearing animals, the food value of fish and game and their recreational value to the resident and visiting sportsman aggregate a huge sum, and any proposal that tends to the greater efficiency of our Fish and Game department is worthy of your serious consideration.

Washington's Anniversary

Next year will bring us to the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington, and the Federal government is making preparation for a suitable celebration of this event. Pursuant to a joint resolution of Congress of the United States, approved December 2, 1924, a Commission was formed, known as the United States Commission for the celebration of the two hundredth anni-

versary of the birth of George Washington. This Commission is now functioning and preparations are being made for the proposed celebration. Montana together with all of the other states of the Union has been asked to participate in the preparation for this event, and the request has been made, pursuant to the resolution by Congress, for the appointment of a State Commission to cooperate with the Federal Commission. If the Assembly is of the opinion that the State should have a part in planning, preparing for and participating in this historical event, I suggest that the appointment of a Commission be authorized and that a small appropriation be made to enable such Commission to function properly.

Weights and Measures

Under the existing law the Secretary of State is ex officio Sealer of Weights and Measures and has supervision over inspectors of weights and measures and has charge of all the weights and measures of the State. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Labor and Industry is authorized by law to employ an expert tester of scales whose duty it is to test all scales in the State whereon grain, coal, wool and other products are weighed. It seems to me that these two activities should be merged and placed under the supervision of the expert scale tester, under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Commissioner of Agriculture. This would, I believe, increase the efficiency of this service as well as reduce the cost of operation.

Finally

In conclusion, let me remind you that but few new laws are needed. It has often been said that we already have too many laws, and I believe that is true. Keep appropriations down as low as is consistent with efficiency in government and the services demanded from the State by the people. Create no new activities and assume as few new obligations as possible. Allocate the bond issue conservatively and carefully, in a way which will be of the greatest possible benefit to the various State institutions. Keep the ship of State headed in the right direction, and in all your laudable undertakings count on the earnest and sympathetic cooperation of the executive branch of the government. May your sojourn in the capital be most enjoyable, and may your services richly benefit the State and win the approval of your constituents.